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The Transposition of Cosmological Models in Victorian-Catholic and Confucian Paternal Structures

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Abstract

Historically countless religious ideologies have defined the functional role of the family through the hierarchical structuring of the universe. For Confucius the family was the central channel through which social stability extended into society. Drawing from an aesthetic perspective of reality, Confucius understood that hierarchical reciprocity in relational systems was the key to the harmonious structuring of society. This understanding was applied directly to the structure of the family through the modeled relationship between father and son as a parallel to ruler and subject. As the Confucian family emphasized structure within the interdependence of aesthetic social particulars, the Victorian Catholic family drew from the pattern of an ethereal hierarchy. Similar to traditional interpretations of Christian cosmology, Victorian Catholicism viewed the ordering of universe under the divine union of Father, Son, and Holy Spirit. In the shadow of the industrial revolution, the cult of domesticity recast the hierarchical relationship between mother and child in the image of the holy mother Mary. While Mary is not regarded in the pantheon of the Trinity, her role as an ethereal model is central to defining the domestic structure of the Victorian Catholic family. Evaluating these premises this paper will explore the formation of Confucian and Victorian Catholic domestic structures within a cosmological frame of reference.

1. Introduction

Countless religious ideologies have historically modeled the functional role of the family based on a hierarchical structuring of the cosmos. At first glance the terms family and cosmology conjure seemingly contrasting images. The former implies a domestic setting founded on immediate social and physical familiarities, while the latter describes the enigmatic reaches of the celestial heavens. While spatially distinct, the structured relationship between the family and the cosmos has inspired numerous justifications for the central placement of religion in society.

For Confucius, the family was the quintessential channel through which balance and stability extended into society. Drawn from an aesthetic perspective of reality, Confucius recognized that the hierarchical interdependence of the cosmos was critically linked to the harmonious functioning of society. From this principal understanding, Confucianism has historically viewed the foundation of structure in Chinese society through the modeled relationship between father and son as a parallel to the relationship between ruler and subject.

While the Confucian family emphasized structure within the interdependence of physical particulars, in distinction the Victorian Catholic family drew structure from an ethereal framework established through a combination of Biblical interpretation and a shifting cultural climate. Victorian Catholics viewed the ordering of universe under a host of divine patrons, the most important of which was the Holy Trinity comprised of Father, Son, and Holy Spirit. However, in the shadow of the Industrial Revolution, the cult of domesticity reshaped the hierarchical relationship between mother and child in the image of the Holy Mother Mary. Though Mary was not regarded as being in the Trinity, her role as an ethereal model was fundamental to Victorian Catholic identity.

Highlighting this comparison, this paper argues for the centrality of cosmological frames of reference in understanding the formation of modeled roles in Victorian Catholic and Confucian paternal structures. Through a combination of textual analysis and theoretical evaluation my discussion will focus on the comparative modeled structures between mother and child in Victorian Catholicism, and father and son in Confucianism. [1] Emphasizing these specific relationships, this paper will evaluate how the formation and justification of the structure of each relationship is intimately linked with each systems' conceptualization of the cosmos.

2. Transpositions of Authority and the Structure of the Family

The transposition of cosmological structures as models for social roles is hardly novel to the fields of religion and sociology. Over the past few decades numerous scholars have advanced theories tying the structure and purpose of the family to religious ideology. In her work, *Models of God: Theology for an Ecological, Nuclear Age,* Sallie Mcfague discusses the relationship between mankind and the sacred as expressed through the metaphorical roles of God, e.g. mother, lover, friend.[2] Utilizing metaphorical theology, McFague argues that through absorbing contemporary role-models, events, and themes into the structure of religious symbolism, each epoch develops its own unique paradigm for describing God. Among the key relationships described, the role of God as mother, offers an enlightening discussion on the projection of parental roles between mankind and the sacred.[3] In her discussion, McFague maintains that the social and parental roles associated with motherhood are metaphorically reflected in the construction and evolution of religious images. She describes the life-giving role of the mother as a religious symbol:

> It is from this base [the physical act of giving birth], that the model derives its power, for here it joins the reservoir of the great symbols of life and of life's continuity: blood, water, breath, sex, and food. In the acts of conception, gestation, and birth all are involved, and it is therefore no surprise that these symbols became the center of most religions, including Christianity, for they have the power to the renewal and transformation of life.[4]

As McFague focuses on transpositions of authority expressed through metaphorical connections with the sacred, Melford Spiro's groundbreaking research on Burmese spirituality offers a different perspective.[5] Utilizing the field of psychology, Spiro links the formation of religious symbolism with early childhood perceptions of parental authority. According to Spiro, mankind's conceptualization of God, and subsequent invention of religious symbolism, is directly associated with our earliest encounters with our parents. Our childhood perception of our parents as all-powerful protectors and providers, serves to reflect mankind's portrait of God as an omnipotent protector and nurturer. Hence, even from an early age our minds are sculpted to view the world through the lens of authority. This approach, while theoretical, raises countless questions regarding the innate connections between authority, family, and religion. As summarized in Ann Taves' *The Household of Faith:*

> Beginning from birth - prior to their acquisition of the *culturally constituted* conceptions of the world made possible by language - children develop *socially constituted* conceptions of the world on the basis of their social experiences with their parents and the "significant others" comprising their behavioral environment. Hence, inasmuch as infants are entirely helpless and absolutely dependent on these parenting figures, they construct mental images of incredibly powerful beings long before they learn about the existence of the supernatural beings postulated by their culture.[6]

While the exact purpose of incorporating religious symbolism in structuring of the family remains subject for debate among scholars such as McFague, Spiro, and Taves, the historical examination of cases that tie the connection between religion and the family has left considerable room available for discussion and research. Recognizing the possible link between religion and the role of the family, one is inevitably drawn to the basic, yet essential questions: What is meant by family, and how are families structured?

Comparable to the diverse conceptualizations of cosmological symbolism and structure featured in different religious ideologies, the structure and origination of the family has also inspired numerous interpretations and images. Steven Nock's *Sociology of the Family* divides the organization of the family into two major patterns, the nuclear Family, and the extended Family. With room for cultural variation, Nock defines the nuclear family as "the unit consisting of a man and a woman and their own or adopted children."[7] Prominently associated with the United

States, the nuclear family is regarded by contemporary sociologists, as the central family model in all modern industrial societies. Through evaluating data on the average size of families, number of children per household, and frequency of marriage, contemporary sociologists, such as Rudy Ray Seward, have suggested that the projected structures of Victorian families generally falls within the nuclear family model.[8]

In contrast to the basic structure of the nuclear family, the extended family encompasses grandparents, uncles, aunts, and cousins living together in one home or in close proximity.[9] Modern sociologists have been quick to associate the extended family model with families living in China. This is largely due the presence of patrilocal communities, or clans, which have historically served to maintain social stability at local levels in Chinese society.[10] While generally distinct in structure, arrangement of marriage, and origination, the nuclear and extended families share similar structural components e.g., father, mother, son, daughter. Recognizing the comparable roles within each system, my use of the term "family" will not directly focus on the nuclear and extended family models, but on the similar arrangement of the family roles in each system.

Over the past century numerous sociologists, such as Talcott Parsons, have theorized over the function of the family in society.[11] This theoretical approach, often called structural functionalism, or functionalism, argues that "each social structure is thought to perform vital functions for a society."[12] Viewed within the structural functional framework, the individual components of social institutions are accorded meaning by their function within the entire social system. [13] In conversation with the topic of family, structural functionalism seeks to highlight the purpose behind the matrix of structured roles as they relate to the family as a whole. In the context of my discussion, I will utilize the relationship between structure and function as a focal point throughout my evaluation of each domestic structure and corresponding religious framework. However, in place of establishing the position of religious ideology as the primary function of each system, my goal is to evaluate the justified purpose of specific domestic orientation through a religious lens. For this reason I do not claim that my thesis truly follows the structural functional approach; rather, through evaluating Victorian Catholic and Confucian domestic structures, I hope to entertain a novel qualification of this theory by examining the religious justifications for the purpose of each domestic structure.

While the goal of my paper will be to evaluate the specific structural components featured in Victorian Catholicism and Confucianism, it goes beyond the scope of my discussion to establish the relationship between the cosmos and the family as universal. This is largely due to the countless diverse representations of the cosmos and the family present throughout culture and history. Instead, this paper will present a narrowed focus on the idealized domestic structures featured in Victorian Catholicism and Confucianism through the perspective of religion. Having discussed the contemporary literature surrounding the modeled transposition of authority, the structure of family, and the structural-functional approach, I now turn to evaluating the hierarchical relationship between mother and child in Victorian Catholicism. I will start by tracing the historical development of Victorian Catholicism, as it pertains to the relationship between the structure of the family and the cosmos.

3.1 Catholicism in Victorian America

Before outlining the relationship between the Victorian Catholic cosmos and family, there are three historical features that set the foundation for this connection that must be addressed first. Among these key features, the continuous expansion of Irish Catholic immigration, the rise of Devotionalism, and the development of industrial consumer culture each played a critical role in defining the family and the religious practice in Victorian Catholic America.

Throughout the Victorian era, the gradual exodus of Catholic immigrants to America radically reshaped the structure of the American industrial complex and the Catholic Church. While the earliest waves of Catholic immigrants were primarily German, the population of Irish Catholic immigrants swelled throughout the century as the Irish grew to dominate the Catholic American clergy. Recent statistics have suggested that during the first half of the century, "from 1820 to 1850, the Catholic Church grew from about 195,000 members - less than four percent of the nation's total number of Christians - to 1.75 million, becoming the largest religious body in the United States".[14] Despite discrimination from other Christian denominations, high infant mortality rates, and crushing poverty the total number of Irish living in America continued to rise, reaching nearly 5 million by the end of the century.[15]

As Irish Catholics continued to pour into the United States, they brought with them a hybrid form of Catholicism blended with Irish folk religion. To the existing American clergy the Irish folk practices of the Old World often stood in stark contrast to the basic tenets of Catholic ideology. Recognizing the cultural disparity between the incoming waves of immigrants and the American Christian community, American Catholic bishops, aided by

prominent Catholic writers and Parish Missions. began a "devotional revolution" to solidify religious-centered practices in both sacred and domestic space.[16]

Within the sacred space of the church the clergy maintained the importance of formal worship over the religious rituals of the hearth. However, outside of the church the devotional revolution emphasized the potential religious dimensions of the Victorian home. With the rising circulation of Catholic literature, prayer books, and sermons, the devotional revolution granted Victorian Catholics appropriate means of expressing their faith at home. As American consumer culture spread, the availability of Catholic literature and religious paraphernalia helped foster the view that the Christian home was a valuable tool in the quest for salvation. Apart from material forms of religious expression, Catholic devotions also provided numerous ethereal models from which family members could emulate. Among the most significant of these, Catholic writers portrayed the Holy mother Mary as the religious ideal for Victorian women to follow. This connection between devotions and the structure of the home will be featured at length in the following section of my discussion.

While the devotional revolution formed the religious dimensions of Victorian Catholic life, the massive expansion of industrialization and subsequent consumer culture that followed reshaped the domestic dimensions of American society. The shifting structure of American industry significantly impacted the familial dimensions of Victorian Catholicism in two interrelated ways. First, as America's industry grew, economic opportunities for incoming immigrants became increasingly centered in factory-based labor outside of the domestic sphere. The opportunities and demands of industrial labor, which were often based in the specialization of labor, generally lead middle-class men to pursue employment outside of the home; thus causing them to relinquish their paternal and spiritual role as head of the household. In her book, *The Christian Home in Victorian America, 1840-1850*, Colleen McDannell explains that "as men left their homes they became distanced from domestic activities. The everyday workings of the home - child rearing, food production and preparation, personal health care seemed worlds apart from male activities."[17] This absence of the father from the home would ultimately result in drastic changes to the meaning and structure of the Victorian home.

Second, as the economic realities of Victorian life drew the father away from the duties of the home, the mother became the central figure in charge of the day-to-day functioning of the Catholic household.[18] In place of the father, the traditional male tasks of maintaining the home, and more significantly overseeing the religious instruction of the children, fell to the mother. Underscoring this transition, the expectations of the mother became increasingly idealized in the virtues emulated by the cult of domesticity.

> As men and women drifted farther apart in the workplace, the social roles of the sexes became more distinct. The "cult of true womanhood," based on the Victorian understanding of women as the models of purity, piety, and domesticity, separated women from men and their world. . .The period of the Puritan father overseeing the family economy with the support of wife, children, and apprentices had become a distant memory. Now it was the mother who, according to cultural norms, would be expected to nurture the family.[19]

Though the maintenance of the home was considered important by Victorian Catholics, the spiritual bond between mother and child took on a more immediate and significant meaning in Catholic literature and devotions.

3.2. The Relationship between the Victorian Catholic Cosmos and the Family

The central role of the mother in the Victorian home did not mean that the patriarchal-based family model disappeared or was considered less significant by Victorian Catholics. In the Victorian Christian worldview, the father's authority over the home stood parallel to the central position of God the father. Highlighting this view stood the assumption that the structure of the family was a reflection of the hierarchical ordering of the Catholic cosmos.

In his essay *The Shape and Meaning of Earth History*, Martin J. S. Rudwick describes the historically dominant image of Christian cosmology as having derived from a geocentric view of the cosmos.[20] In the Western tradition this view has been associated with the Middle Age belief that the earth, and implicitly mankind, stood as the unmoving center of the celestial universe. While man's position in the universe was considered distinctly separate from heaven, the whole of creation formed a dependent bond with the will of heaven. The ordering of the celestial cosmos was arguably reflected in the hierarchal arrangement of social systems, such as the church, as a parallel to the natural order of the universe. As described at length by Rudwick:

> In this image of world history the cosmos was bounded as much temporally as spatially: it had a clear beginning in Creation, and God's action would bring it to an equally decisive End. It was also structured as much temporally as spatially within these limits. It had a unique midpoint in the events surrounding the life of Christ, which divided the old relationship between God and mankind from the new. On either side of that divide, the particularities of patriarchs and prophets, apostles and saints, were framed by past and future events of global significance, namely the Flood and the Parousia (or Second Coming of Christ). . . This whole temporal structure imbued the past, present, and future of the cosmos with human meaning: it attributed order to the often chaotic flux of human lives and gave social action a transcendent context and justification.[21]

The hierarchical structuring of Catholic ideology was defined by the central role of the Holy Trinity as an authority over an ethereal host of angels, prophets, apostles, saints. Highlighting the structuring of the cosmos, the dependent relationship between heaven and earth was directly embodied in the social foundations of Catholicism. Hence, Rudwick's cosmic images helps to explain how Victorian Catholics viewed the structure of the Church, and implicitly the family, as direct extensions of the ethereal hierarchy in heaven.

This parallel between the structure of heaven and the family was not missed by Victorian Catholic writers. In *All For Jesus,* Victorian theologian F. W. Faber draws upon this connection by describing the structure of heaven using familial terms. In Faber's view "[t]he blessed Lord God is our Father; His dear Majesty is our affair; our Elder Brother created us, and has our own nature; Mary is our mother; and the angels and saints are all the kindest and most familiar of brothers".[22] To suggest that the father completely disappeared from family would be inaccurate, and would further minimize the metaphorical connection between the structure of heaven and the structure of earth.

That the mother emerged as the central figure of the Victorian Christian home is significant because it signaled a shift away from the paternally focused model of Puritan America, towards a nurturing maternal model grounded in the virtuous image of Mary. As McDannell addresses:

> In the maternal model of religion the significant relationship is the mother-child bond. God the father, is replace by the image of Jesus crowning his mother, Mary, Queen of Heaven. This model calls on love and not authority to define both religion and society. . . God speaks individually, as a mother does to her children, rather than a father to his household.[23]

This last point introduces the position of Mary as a model for the Victorian Catholic mother. As an ethereal figure, Mary was viewed by Victorian Catholics as the ideal model for purity, obedience, piety and motherhood.[24] Read in conversation with cult of domesticity, Victorian Catholic women were expected to emulate the nurturing feminine archetype of Mary in their domestic role as mother. This expectation extended directly into the mother's ability to provide nurturing care and religious education to the children in the home.

While the industrial revolution pushed the father outside of the home, the devotional revolution gave birth to a new wave of religious literature that aligned the expectations of the mother with the virtues of Mary. The image of the obedience of the child in the care of the nurturing mother was depicted numerous times by Victorian authors as a reflection of the bond between Jesus and Mary. In *The Household of Faith,* Ann Taves illustrates this point by drawing on numerous examples from Victorian literature. Among these examples, Taves cites the account of Archbishop Spalding and the *Ave Maria* translation of "Legends of the Blessed Virgin." In the former, with the death of his mother Spalding recast the image of Mary as the central maternal figure throughout his life. As his nephew describes in the account, "he [Archbishop Spalding] had lost his own mother. . . when he was five years old, and he had taken the Blessed Virgin for his mother, and she had taken care of him through his life."[25]

Similar to Spalding's rendering of Mary, the *Ave Maria* translation of the European tale, "Legends of the Blessed Virgin," depicts a young medieval knight and his deep admiration to the Holy mother.

> The image of the blessed Lady was to him a symbol of all his faith. He desired Heaven because it was blessed with her sweet presence. . . He loved to recommend himself to her. . . [and] Mary had never been deaf to his prayers. When any one mentioned Her name, his usual sternness gave way to a more tender air. He would have joyfully shed every drop of his blood for Her. . . these two affections [Mary and his wife], the only ones rooted in his heart *since the death of his mother,* had taken entire possession of Berenger, no other creature had discovered the way to inspire him with attachment.[26]

The written accounts of Archbishop Spalding and the knight in "Legends of the Blessed Virgin" highlight both the reverence placed upon Mary, and, more subtly, the obedient devotion one might expect a child to bestow upon his or her mother. For Victorian Catholics the language and images surrounding Mary often blurred her ethereal form with

the roles and expectations of a natural mother. Read concurrently with the Victorian Catholic conceptualization of the cosmos, the emulation of Mary as the ideal mother serves to validate a Victorian-Catholic justification for the structured relationship between mother and child. In the following section of my argument I will examine a similar religious justification as I explore the relationship between father and son in Confucianism.

4.1 The Confucian Cosmos and Sociopolitical Order

Among the pivotal ideologies associated with the Chinese worldview, the systemized teachings and philosophies of Confucius referred to as Confucianism, have historically epitomized the heart of Chinese identity. Confucius, also known as Kongzi or Master Kong, was born in the ancient state of Lu during the warring states era of Chinese history. Witness to the decline of the Zhou dynasty, Confucius lived during a period defined by political and social division. As feudal leaders competed for control over lands and resources, the deterioration of centralized leadership ultimately resulted in the widespread escalation of social turbulence. Seeking to recreate the "golden age" of Chinese antiquity, Confucius strove to discover the formula for creating lasting social stability throughout China. Among the central elements associated with Confucius' utopian vision was the interdependent relationship between the cosmos, society and the family.

Distinct from the iconic visions of a heavenly kingdom visualized by Victorian Catholics, the Confucian literary tradition offers little speculation on the ethereal nature of the cosmos. [27] A close reading of *The Analects* suggests that Confucius maintained a stance of disinterest on topics regarding the afterlife. As indicated in the text: "The Master had nothing to say about strange happenings, the use of force, disorder, or the spirits" (7.21).[28] And again: "We can learn from the Master's cultural refinement, but we do not hear him discourse on subjects such as our 'natural disposition' and 'the way of *tian"* (5.13).[29] Contemporary Confucian scholars have attempted to explain this by suggesting that Confucius' views on cosmology were understood by his following as existing elements from antiquity that were reapplied to his sociopolitical philosophies. Recognizing the cultural norms Confucius likely drew from, scholars have noted that Confucius' stance on the cosmos, while textually ambiguous, carries inherently religious connotations. [30]

In their extensive work, *Thinking Through Confucius*, Roger Ames and David Hall describe the relationship between mankind and the cosmos through the key terms of *tian, tao,* and *te.*[31] Central to the Confucian worldview, *tian* or "heaven" refers to the merging of cultural, social, and human particulars into an overarching conceptualization of ordered existence. Literally translated as "heaven", *tian* distinctly contrasts the Judeo-Christian separation between heaven and earth by embodying an interdependent connection with human actuality. For Confucius, there was no distinction between the emanator of creation and the created product itself. Hence, *tian* could most accurately be understood as embodying both the individual components of physical reality, and the total sum of reality itself.

> *T'ien [tian*] is wholly immanent, having no existence independent of phenomena that constitute it. There is as much validity in asserting that phenomena 'create' *t'ien* as in saying that *t'ien* creates phenomena; the relationship between *t'ien* and phenomena, therefore, is one of interdependence. The meaning and value of *t'ien* is a function of the meaning and value of its many phenomena, and the order of *t'ien* is expressed in the harmony that obtains among its correlative parts.[32]

While *tian* embodies the ordered interdependence of the aesthetic cosmos, *tao* broadly represents mankind's continuous interaction with said order. For Confucius, the *tao* existed as the creative navigation of humanity through the living world. Drawn from the central focus on antiquity in the Confucian tradition, one participates in *tao* by actively defining and contributing achievement through communal lineage. Thus, *tao* focuses one's path through the relational interpretation of the past, into present and future circumstances. This concentration on human becoming through the ongoing reconnection between each successive generation and its precursors serves to reflect the importance of interdependence throughout the Confucian worldview.

> The *tao* is the continuous progress of human civilization, an interpretation of human experience surveyed and laid down by successive generations. . . The unity of *tao* is expressed by the fact that each present perspective is a function of all past events, and is the ground for all future possibilities. Not only is the past cast in the present and future, but the past itself is constantly being revisioned and recast in light of the achievements of the present.[33]

Among the central components associated with Confucianism, *te* focuses the cosmological connection between *tian* and *tao,* heaven and the human tradition. To understand *te* one must recognize that the Confucian worldview embodies what Ames and Hall have called, a "hologrammatic perspective," wherein each individual component directly reflects the sum or the whole.[34] The hologrammatic nature of Confucianism will be featured further in the following section of my argument. For the moment, I will note that *te* incorporates the hologrammatic model by embodying the integrative focus of particulars "in the process of existence." Viewed in conversation with *tian* and *tao, te* centralizes the existence of a cosmological field, *tian,* within the focus of a social dimension, *tao.* In other words, the social dimension of Confucianism is hologrammaticly reflected in the cosmological order; hence, the focused relationship between part and whole emphasized by *te* ultimately presents cosmology and social philosophy as interdependent components in Confucian ideology.

4.2 The Structuring of Confucian Family Roles

Recognizing the link between the sociopolitical order and the natural arrangement of reality, Confucius sought to promote social harmony by establishing the central position of modeled authority as parallel to the interdependence of the cosmos. Throughout the Confucian classics, Confucius extolls the modeled leadership of the sage-king and the *junzi* (exemplary gentleman/superior man) as championing filial reverence, human becoming, and ritual harmony under *tian.* For Confucius, the power and function of the model extended relationally from the model's ability to protect the welfare of the masses while navigating those below towards social development. As revealed from a critical reading of *The Analects*: "Ji Kangzi asked Confucius about governing effectively (*zheng*), and Confucius replied to him, "Governing effectively is doing what is proper (*zheng*). If you sir, lead by doing what is proper, who would dare do otherwise?" (12.17).[35] And here again:

> Ranyou asked, "When the people are already so numerous, what more can be done for them?" The Master said, "Make them prosperous." "When the people are already prosperous," asked Ranyou, "what more can be done for them?" "Teach them," replied the Master (13.9).[36]

That the relationship between the model and the people is founded on the basis of reciprocity serves to emphasize the interconnection of modeled relationships across the Confucian worldview. As Confucius' advocacy for modeled leadership is read in conversation with the interdependence of *tao* and *tian,* modeled figures, such as the sage-king, *junzi*, and father, can be viewed as manifestations of highest sociopolitical and religious ideal in Confucian ideology.[37] Recognizing that the model relationship is grounded in the interdependent nature of *tian,* we are ultimately drawn to both the formation of relational structures that are meaningfully reflected across society, and to the emergence of the modeled figure in transposing order and virtue. Among the most basic of these structures the family was modeled on the structure of society.

In Confucianism the family is considered "an ecology in which the interdependence of the constituted members means that the prosperity in one sector redounds to the health and well-being of the whole."[38] Among the key principles attributed to the structure and stability of the family, *xiao,* or filial reverence defined the appropriate relationships between family members. Evaluating the domestic relationships reflected throughout society, the filial bond between father and son occupied a central position in Confucian ideology. Viewed within the context of *xiao,* the relationship between the father and son was directly defined through hierarchical reciprocity. As the superior, the father bestows life and well-being to the son. In return, from the lower position, the son regards the father with appropriate expressions of respect, devotion, grief, and veneration.[39] In conversation with the central position of modeled authority in society, the filial relationship between father and son was regarded by Confucius as a reflection of the appropriate relationship between ruler and subject. As Confucius reveals to Master Zeng in *The Chinese Classic of Family Reverence:*

> The proper way (*dao*) between father and son is a natural propensity that by extension becomes the appropriate relationship (*yi)* between ruler and minister. There is no bond more important than the father and mother giving life to their progeny, and there is no generosity more profound than the care and concern this progeny receives from their ruler and parents.[40]

As the son shows deference to the father, the subject practices loyalty towards the ruler; as the father cares for the well-being of the son, the ruler acts with benevolence and generosity towards the masses.

Recognizing this point, the central importance of the family is further established holistically through the modeling of filial reverence by the ruler. As Confucius states, "[w]ith love and respect being fully expressed in this service to parents, such conduct will educate and transform (*dejiao*) the common people, serving as exemplary in all corners of the world. Such, then, is the family reverence of the Emperor."[41] The ruler's devotion towards his parents and ancestors provides a central model of the filial reverence echoed throughout the kingdom. Hence, the comparable relationships between father and son, ruler and subject, and their subsequent expressions form an isomorphic social reality grounded in a cosmological frame of reference.

Paralleling the filial bond between father and son to the hierarchical relationship between ruler and subject serves to reemphasize the field and focus (*te*) nature of the Confucian worldview. Wherein the filial obligations and social etiquette created through the structuring of family roles, in this case between the father and the son, can be viewed as a direct reflection of the sociopolitical, and implicitly, cosmological orders governing reality. That the meaningful arrangement of the family is hologrammaticly expressed through the social and religious dimensions of Confucian ideology confirms that the structure of the family is justified in the interdependent nature of the cosmos.

5. Conclusion

In the closing chapter of *The Christian Home in Victorian America, 1840-1890,* McDannell concludes that "[s]tudying the role of religion within the home and the sacralizing impact of domestic symbols and activities emphasizes the importance of the family as an institution, an institution which stands between the community and the individual, possessing the characteristics of each."[42] The purpose of this paper was to discuss the relationship between religion and the family by examining the structuring of specific parental roles in two distinct religious ideologies.

For the Victorian-Catholics the structuring of the family was justified through the an age-old conceptualization of a paternally structured cosmos. As new waves of immigration feed the American industrial complex, the vacant position of the father in the home led to an emphasis on the role of the mother. Emulating the relationship between Mary and Jesus, the central relationship in the Victorian Catholic family gradually shifted focus to the nurturing bond between mother-child. With slight contrast to the Victorian-Catholic model, Confucius placed specific focus on hierarchical reciprocity in the formation of relationships. Modeling the structure of the family on the interdependent connection between *tian* and *tao,* Confucius saw the relationship between the father and the son as a hologrammatic reflection of an ordered cosmos.

While separated by history and culture, both Victorian Catholicism and Confucianism metaphorically embody the sacred within the profane structure of the family. In aligning the structure and function of the family within the cosmos, these systems participate in a deep, albeit metaphorical level of spiritual practice. The implications of this are profound, as we are forced to reconsider the lines that unify and divide the familial, social, and the cosmological dimensions of reality. As I stated in my introduction, the study of the relationship between religion and the family is not new, though further research on this topic will be necessary in examining specific historic examples of this phenomenon. By studying the intimate relationship between religion and the structure of the family, we may begin to reflect upon new answers to the necessary questions: Who are we, how did we get where we are, and in what direction are we moving?

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7. Notes

1 In comparing these two systems, I am not evaluating the cultural, social, and political differences attributed by the disparity of time, rather, I am examining each as religious ideologies transposed on the societies particular to their origination. Hence I am in no way suggesting that Confucianism and Victorian Catholicism share a common origin. Merely that the characteristics of the phenomenon that I am examining can be evaluated distinctly within each system.

2 Sallie McFague, Models of God: Theology for an Ecological, Nuclear Age (Philadelphia: Fortress Press, 1988).

3 By using McFague's model of the mother I do not intend to draw my discussion towards the gendered division of parental roles in the transposition of religious authority. Hence, am I not suggesting that the role of mother or father takes precedence as a religious symbol, merely that the role of the mother, as described by McFague, is a critical example of the metaphorical roles associated with the sacred.

4 McFague, Models for God: Theology for an Ecological, Nuclear Age,

5 See, Melford E. Spiro, Burmese Supernaturalism (1978)

6 Ann Taves, The Household of Faith (Notre Dame, IN: University of Notre Dame Press, 1986), 82.

7 Steven L. Nock, Sociology of the Family (Englewood Cliffs, NJ: Prentice Hall, Inc., 1987), 30.

8 In his book, The American Family: A Demographic History (1978), Rudy Ray Seward evaluates the structural changes that have occurred in American families. Utilizing data gathered from the U.S census demographics Steward analyzes why the overall structure of the family has changed little in the two previous centuries.

9 Nock, Sociology of the Family, 31-32.

10 See Fei Xiaotong's, From the Soil:The Foundations of Chinese Society (1992), for an extended background into the role of patrilocal communities in rural Chinese society.

11 See The Social Theories of Talcott Parsons (1961), edited by Max Black, for the theoretical approaches to family systems developed by Talcott Parsons.

12 Nock, Sociology of the Family, 13.

13 In recent years the topic of structural functionalism has been heavily criticized for providing theoretical justifications for certain controversial issues, such as the necessity of poverty. However, it goes beyond the scope of my discussion to provide a full outline of the controversial elements of this theory.

14 Ryan K. Smith, Gothic Arches, Latin Crosses (Chapel Hill, NC: The University of North Carolina Press, 2006), 9.

15 Colleen McDannell, The Victorian Christian Home in Victorian America, 1840-1900 (Bloomington and Indianapolis, IN: Indiana University Press, 1986), 10.

16 See Emmett Larkin's "The Devotional Revolution in Ireland: 1850-1875" (1972) for more information on the devotional revolution taking place in the Catholic Church throughout the Victorian era.

17 McDannell, The Christian Home in Victorian America, 1840-1890, 7.

18 This phenomenon was not exclusive to Victorian Catholic families. As the industrial revolution swept across America Victorian denominations and families experienced their own religious and domestic transitions.

19 McDannell, The Christian Home in Victorian America, 1849-1890, 7-8.

20 Martin J. S. Rudwick, "The Shape and Meaning of Earth History," in God and Nature: Historical Essays on the Encounter between Christianity and Science, ed. David C. Lindberg and Ronald L. Numbers (Berkley, CA: University of California Press, 1986), 301-2.

21 Ibid.. 302.

22 Cited from Ann Taves, Household of Faith, 48.

23 McDannell, The Christian Home in Victorian America, 1840-1890, 127.

24 Ibid.. 1840-1890, 142.

25 Cited from Ann Taves, The Household of Faith, 83-84.

26 Ibid.. 84.

27 My discussion of Confucian cosmology and sociopolitical philosophy extends from the Confucian Classics, merged with scholarly interpretations by scholars Roger Ames, David Hall, and Henry Rosemont. Hence, I will primarily utilize theoretical and textual interpretations in discussing Confucianism. For more information on the historical conceptualizations of Chinese Cosmology see John Henderson's The Development and Decline of Chinese Cosmology (1984). For information on the structure of Chinese society see Fei Xiaotong's, From the Soil: The Foundations of Chinese Society (1992).

28 The Analects of Confucius: A Philosophical Translation, trans. Roger T. Ames and Henry Rosemont (New York: The Ballantine Publishing Group, 1998), 115.

29 Ibid.. 98.

30 David L. Hall and Roger T. Ames, Thinking Through Confucius (Albany, NY: State University of New York Press, 1987), 198.

31 Ibid.. 200.

32 Ibid.. 207.

33 Ibid.. 231.

34 Ibid.. 238.

35 The Analects of Confucius: A Philosophical Translation, 157.

36 Ibid.. 164.

37 This point is subtle in that it presupposes the connection between the Confucian religious tradition and sociopolitical order. Having highlighted this connection I am asserting that the model reflected throughout the Confucian society is (1) the highest social manifestation of the cosmological order governing reality, and (2) the role of the model carries certain religious connotations in the Confucian tradition

38 Roger T. Ames and Henry Rosemont, "Introduction." In The Chinese Classic of Family Reverence (Honolulu: University of Hawaii, 2009), 23.

39 The Chinese Classic of Family Reverence, trans. Roger T. Ames and Henry Rosemont (Honolulu: University of Hawaii Press, 2009), 111.

40 Ibid.. 110.

41 Ibid.. 106.

42 McDannell, The Christian Home in Victorian America, 1840-1890, 151.